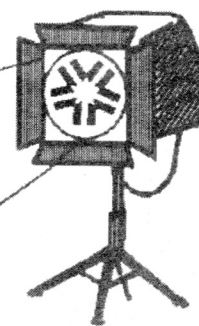


DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE ON AGING

Spotlight On Aging



VOLUME XXIV, ISSUE 2

A newsletter for D.C. Seniors

February 2013



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

By John M. Thompson,
Ph.D., FAAMA

In last month's issue of "Spotlight on Aging," I highlighted our Ambassador Program and how we plan to offer opportunities for the Office on Aging Ambassadors to become involved in a meaningful way through volunteerism.

In this month's issue, I will discuss the valuable role an ambassador can play in changing the lives of our District's seniors and persons with disabilities. I trust that by the end of this story, you will be convinced that you can make a difference and will be energized to partner with the Office on Aging.

I have a cousin who suffered from a stroke and was in an intensive care unit for a short period of time until she was admitted into a nursing home for rehabilitation service for what was considered a short-term stay. However, two years later, she is still in a nursing home spending nearly \$7,000 of her retirement money on institutional services.

She desires to return home, but does not have family members in her immediate area advocating for her or simply understanding how to get her home. Therefore, she remains in a nursing home and does not know how to begin the nursing home transition process.

After learning of her story and her desire to return home, I visited my cousin in late December, and she explained her situation to me. As I listened to her, I learned that she was anxious to return to the residence she has called home, where she lived for more than 50 years, raising her children, spending many holidays cooking and baking in her kitchen, and gathering with family and friends by her fireplace.

She no longer felt that she should remain in a nursing home, where she simply did not participate in the social activities offered at the facility. She explained to me that her days were spent looking out of the window of her single-occupancy room without any meaningful tasks.

Based on my visit to the nursing home, I immediately connected with the Options Counselor for the local Area Agency on Aging (similar to the work of the D.C. Office on Aging) in Fayetteville and explained my cousin's situation to her. In a matter of a week, the Options Counselor met with my cousin, reviewed her medical files, assessed my cousin, and offered her viable solutions in helping her to transition back home. This is exciting news for my cousin! I am hoping that she can return to her home within the next 30 days.

You may know of someone in a similar situation as my cousin or someone in a hospital who needs home- and community-based services upon discharge, or someone in his/her home who needs services to remain in the community.

If so, you can help as an Ambassador! My experience in working with my cousin has been an easy and rewarding one, and I am confident that you will experience the same joy and excitement in helping someone. Please contact us at 202-724-5622 to enroll in an Office on Aging Ambassador Training Program.

Searching for Ms. Senior D.C. 2013

We are looking for Ms. Senior D.C. 2013. If you know of a senior woman who is active in her community, elegant, and possesses a talent that she would like to share, please make sure she is entered in the Ms. Senior D.C. Pageant 2013. For more information or to receive an application, call 202-724-5626. Shown at right, Ms. Senior D.C. 2012, Mary L. McCoy.



Dr. John M. Thompson, Executive Director of the D.C. Office on Aging, brought greetings to residents of the Armed Forces Retirement Home during the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service event with the Retired and Seniors Volunteer Program and Senior Works Internship Program volunteers. Residents were treated to entertainment through dance and song by members of the D.C. Seniors Cameo Club and others. Family Matters of Greater Washington sponsored the event.

DCOA Provides Options Counseling

Options Counseling provides individuals, family members and/or significant others with support in their decisions to determine appropriate choices.

During this process, a written plan for receiving community resources is developed based on an individual's needs, preferences, values and circumstances. This service is available regardless of income or financial assets.

The ADRC Options Counselor also provides clients with:

- A "live" voice that listens and under-

stands the client's needs

- Respectful and truthful guidance
- Knowledgeable & responsive staff
- Thoughtful client follow-up, including a

consumer satisfaction survey

If you are:

- In a nursing home
- In the hospital
- Or in your own home

Contact the D.C. Office on Aging Information and Assistance Line at 202-724-5626 for more information about counseling services or to make an appointment.



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

VINCENT C. GRAY, MAYOR

Winter Fire Safety Tips from the U.S. Fire Administration

The high costs of home heating fuels and utilities have caused many Americans to search for alternate sources of home heating.

The use of wood burning stoves is growing, and space heaters are selling rapidly, or coming out of storage. Fireplaces are burning wood and manmade logs.

All these methods of heating may be acceptable. They are, however, a major contributing factor in residential fires. Many of these fires can be prevented. The following fire safety tips can help you maintain a fire-safe home this winter.

Wood Stoves and Fireplaces

Wood stoves and fireplaces are becoming a very common heat source in homes. Careful attention to safety can minimize their fire hazard.

To use them safely:

Be sure the fireplace or stove is installed properly. Wood stoves should have adequate clearance (36") from combustible surfaces and proper floor support and protection.

Wood stoves should be of good quality, solid construction and design, and should be laboratory tested.

Have the chimney inspected annually and cleaned if necessary, especially if it has not been used for some time.

Do not use flammable liquids to start or accelerate any fire.

Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace opening to prevent embers or sparks from jumping out, unwanted material from going in, and help prevent the possibility of burns to occupants.

Wood stoves should be burned hot twice a day for 15 to 30 minutes to reduce the amount of creosote buildup.

Fire Safety Tips for the Home

Don't use excessive amounts of paper to build fires in fireplaces. It is possible to ignite creosote in the chimney by overbuilding the fire.

Never burn charcoal indoors. Burning charcoal can give off lethal amounts of carbon monoxide.

Keep flammable materials away from your fireplace mantel. A spark from the fireplace could easily ignite these materials.

Before you go to sleep, be sure your fireplace fire is out. NEVER close your damper with hot ashes in the fireplace. A closed damper will help the fire to heat up again and will force toxic carbon monoxide into the house.

If synthetic logs are used, follow the directions on the package. NEVER break a synthetic log apart to quicken the fire, or use more than one log at a time. They often burn unevenly, releasing higher levels of carbon monoxide.

Furnace Heating

It is important that you have your furnace inspected to ensure that it is in good working condition. Be sure all furnace controls and emergency shutoffs are in proper working condition.

Leave furnace repairs to qualified specialists. Do not attempt repairs yourself unless you are qualified. Inspect the walls and ceiling near the furnace and along the chimney line. If the wall is hot or discolored, additional pipe insulation or clearance may be required.

Check the flue pipe and pipe seams. Are they well supported and free of holes and cracks? Soot along or around seams may be an indicator of a leak.

Is the chimney solid, with cracks or loose bricks? All unused flue openings should be sealed with solid masonry.

Keep trash and other combustibles away from the heating system.

Other Fire Safety Tips

Never discard hot ashes inside or near the home. Place them in a metal container outside and well away from the house.

Never use a range or an oven as

a supplemental heating device. Not only is it a safety hazard, it can be a source of potentially toxic fumes.

If you use an electric heater, be sure not to overload the circuit. Only use extension cords that have the necessary rating to carry an amp load. Tip: Choose an extension cord the same size or larger than the appliance electrical cord.

Avoid using electrical space heaters in bathrooms or other areas where they may come in contact with water.

Frozen water pipes? Never try to thaw them with a blow torch or other open flame, otherwise the pipe could conduct the heat and ignite the wall structure inside the wall space. Use hot water or a laboratory tested device, such as a hand-held dryer, for thawing.

If windows are used as emergency exits in your home, practice using them in the event fire should strike. Be sure that all the windows open easily. Home escape ladders are recommended.

If there is a fire hydrant near your home, you can assist the fire department by keeping the hydrant clear of snow so in the event it is needed, it can be located.

Finally, be sure every level of your home has a working smoke alarm, and be sure to check and clean it on a monthly basis.

Plan and practice a home escape plan with your family.

Contact your local fire department for advice if you have a question on home fire safety.



Helping Seniors in the Community

Do you need a bedroom, kitchen or bath painted? Do you need to replace damaged drywall, mend a wood fence or have small house repairs?

If your answer is yes and you can afford to purchase the paint or building materials for any job that does not require a DCRA building permit, this is your lucky day!

The D.C. Office on Aging, in collaboration with Youth Build Public Charter

School, has developed an intergenerational program to help seniors in the community. Youth Build is providing the labor to help seniors and older adults who have disabilities repair or paint their homes.

If you are a resident and a senior living in one of the District of Columbia's eight wards, you qualify to get your home fixed at No Cost for the labor; all you need is pay for the materials.

We will visit your home or apartment with the Youth Build Construction Manager to conduct a scope of work and provide you with a cost estimate for your material.

Youth Build Public Charter School offers on-the-job training programs while helping the students obtain their GED and learn a viable trade. The school will use its Workforce Construction team, supervised by a profes-

sional project manager, to improve your home. Visit its website www.youthbuildpcs.org to learn more about the school.

Reservations will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis. To take advantage of this wonderful service, please contact the DC Office on Aging at 202-724-5626 or you can email: dcoa@dc.gov to register and get started.

Community Calendar

February events

5th • 7 p.m.

Mayor Vincent C. Gray presents the State of the District Address at the Sixth and I Historic Synagogue, 600 I St. NW. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

7th • 11:30 a.m.

Take a "Healthy Heart Seminar" at Ft. Lincoln 2 Senior Nutrition Site, 3001 Bladensburg Rd. NE. For more information, call Vivian Grayton at 202-529-8701.

8th • 10 a.m.

Attend a Valentine's Day event for Ward 5's older adults sponsored by Seabury Resources for Aging at 1251 Saratoga Ave. NE. For more information, call Vivian Grayton at 202-529-8701.

13th • 11:30 a.m.

An elder abuse seminar titled "An Age for Justice" will be presented by the U.S. Attorney's Office at Edgewood Terrace Senior Nutrition Site, 635 Edgewood St. NE. For more information, call Vivian Grayton at 202-529-8701.

19th+ • 1 to 3 p.m.

Iona Senior Services will present "Opera Gems," a six-week class presented in partnership with the Washington Concert Opera. The fee is \$60. Iona is located at 4125 Albemarle St. NW. To register, call 202-895-9448.

20th • 10 a.m.

The Hattie Holmes Senior Wellness Center and the Office on Aging will host a Black History Month celebration, "At the Crossroads of Freedom and Equality: The Emancipation Proclamation and the March on Washington," at Hattie Holmes Senior Wellness Center, 324 Kennedy St. NW. For more information, call 202-291-6170.

21st • 10 a.m.

The Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired will present a black history program at 1251 Saratoga Ave. NE. For more information, call Vivian Grayton at 202-529-8701.

27th • 10:15 a.m.

Model Cities Senior Wellness Center will present "Saluting African American Women." The center is located at 1901 Evarts St. NE. For more information, contact Monica Carroll at 202-635-1900.

March & April events

March 4, 11 & 18 • 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Iona Senior Services holds a class called "Living with Middle Stage Alzheimer's, for Caregivers." The free class is designed to provide caregivers with the knowledge, tools and strategies needed to cope. Iona is located at 4125 Albemarle St. NW. To register, call 202-895-9448.

April 27+

The Washington Seniors Wellness Center is sponsoring a nine-day, eight-night trip to Branson, Mo. from April 27 to May 5. The fee is \$739 per person double occupancy. The trip departs from the Wellness Center, 3001 Alabama Ave. SE, at 8 a.m. on April 27. For more information or to sign up, contact Helen Clarke at 202-581-9355.

Nominate a Senior for Links Award

The Capital City Chapter of the Links, Incorporated, a volunteer community service organization, has announced that it will accept nominations for its 2013 "Sage Senior Award" honoring Greater Washington Area seniors who are 70 years of age and older for outstanding

community service contributions.

For consideration, nominations must be received by Feb. 27. For further information and to obtain nomination forms, please contact Stephanie Myers at 202-327-4301 or by email at rjpub@earthlink.net

SPOTLIGHT ON AGING

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The D.C. Office on Aging does not discriminate against anyone based on actual or perceived: race, color, religion, nation-

al origin, sex, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, familial status, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, disability, source of income, and place of residence or business.

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination which is prohibited by the Act. In addition, harassment based on any of the above protected categories is prohibited by the Act. Discrimination in violation of the Act will not be tolerated. Violators will be subjected to disciplinary action.

**The Office on Aging is
in partnership with the
District of Columbia
Recycling Program.**

SEEKING: District Centenarians



The District is searching for **residents who are age 100 or older** to honor during an event planned for this spring. If you know of residents who have **celebrated their centennial birthday by March 30**, please call Darlene Nowlin or Courtney Williams at (202) 724-5626 or you may email: dcoa.communications@dc.gov. When registering centenarians, please make sure you know the name, birth date and contact information for each individual.



Government of the District of Columbia
Vincent C. Gray, Mayor

